



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

1:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

REVISED CALL OF MEETING. Economic Development & University Relations Committee will hold a public hearing with Harvard, MIT, and Lesley Universities to receive their "Town Gown" reports and to discuss current and potential programs and partnerships with the City.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1:02 PM
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1:02 PM

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Economic Development and University Relations Committee was held on Wednesday, June, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 1:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Toner. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent*

Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Wilson – Absent*

Present 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Vice Mayor McGovern and Councillor Wilson were both present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 1:02p.m.

The Chair, Councillor Toner offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing with Harvard, MIT, and Lesley Universities to receive their “Town Gown” reports and to discuss current and potential programs and partnerships with the City. Chair Toner noted that Councillor Pickett was also present, along with Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department. Iram Farooq noted that Chris Cotter, Housing Director, was present via Zoom. Present from Harvard University were Tom Lucey, Kendyl Maher-Trumble, Rebecca Hatchadorian, and Alexandra Offiong. Present from MIT were Sarah Gallop, Jon Alvarez, Susy Joans, and Michael Owu. Present from Lesley via Zoom was Joanne Kossuth.

The Chair, Councillor Toner opened Public Comment.

Aaron Shakow, 225 Walden Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to Harvard PILOT and the 2023 Town Gown Report.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comment regarding Harvard PILOT and offered suggestions for discussion moving forward.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Tom Lucey and the team from Harvard University who gave a presentation titled “Town Gown Report”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation included an introduction, campus planning and projects, campus sustainability, and Harvard University in the community. The team from Harvard was available to respond to comments and questions from the Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Sarah Gallop and the team from MIT who gave a presentation titled “2023 Town Gown Presentation”, which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation included a review of academic projects, student life, open space renewal, climate and sustainability, the Climate Project at MIT, MIT impact goals, commercial projects, affordable housing, retail in Kendall Square, MIT in the community, and economic impact. The team from MIT was available to respond to comments and questions from the Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared he had to leave the meeting early and thanked everyone for their time, presentations, and all the information that was provided.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Joanne Kossuth who gave a presentation titled “Town Gown Follow Up Report”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation reviewed campus overview, Cambridge properties sold through June 2024, art, campus projects, transportation, sustainability, framework, university vision and strategic growth, partnerships, equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice, and community. Joanne Kossuth was available to respond to comments and questions from the Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who thanked everyone for the work they are doing across the community. Councillor Wilson asked the team from Harvard for more information regarding the current construction for more student living spaces and asked where students are currently staying while the construction is being completed. Tom Lucey shared that the construction being done in Cambridge will be completed and ready for the fall and the capacity to house 50% of graduate students exists today, with more being added as construction continues. Councillor Wilson asked for more information on family engagement and parent workshops. Tom Lucey responded by providing an overview of the program. Councillor Wilson asked the team from Harvard how they have been able to support minority and women owned businesses through their training programs. Tom Lucey shared examples and challenges of how they are trying to assist with certain business and noted he would be able to provide more information at a later time. Councillor Wilson shared her excitement and support for sustainability programs and noted she looks forward to reaching long-term and ongoing goals. Councillor Wilson asked MIT for more information regarding their open space and resilience space. Sarah Gallop responded by sharing her excitement and efforts on how MIT is working towards making their open space more known to residents and the community as well as providing examples of how MIT is working towards making it more accessible. Councillor

Wilson asked Joanne Kossuth how many students have been trained through Riverside. Joanne Kossuth shared that the partnership with Riverside started in 2022 and provided data on how many students have been able to participate. Councillor Wilson thanked Joanne Kossuth for all their work and partnerships that have been created in Cambridge.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Siddiqui who shared many of the programs and partnerships that are offered through the Universities and highlighted the gift card program. Councillor Siddiqui shared her appreciation for Lesley University partnering with nonprofit affordable housing developers to get housing in areas of the City that do not have affordable housing. Councillor Siddiqui thanked MIT for their job connector and the great work that comes out of the program. Councillor Siddiqui shared that she sends many people there to use as a resource. Councillor Siddiqui thanked Harvard for their efforts toward housing which has shared much interest from the Council. Councillor Siddiqui shared that she appreciates all the working relationships with the Universities. Councillor Siddiqui asked MIT and Harvard if their rent for retail tenants is below market or at market prices. Members from the three Universities responded and shared examples of how rent is charged for businesses to help create a diverse business experience in the different Squares.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Pickett who noted how impressive it is the number of partnerships and collaborations that are made through the Universities and the work being done within the Cambridge community. Councillor Pickett noted the importance of having the community be aware of the different programs and services the Universities are providing. Councillor Pickett thanked everyone for their time and presentations.

The Chair, Councillor Toner thanked everyone for their presentations and echoed similar comments that were made by previous Councillors. Councillor Toner stressed the importance of the impact the Universities are having in the Cambridge community. Councillor Toner asked the Universities if more housing would be available if they thought more graduate students would choose to live on campus. Tom Lucey responded and shared that every student is different, and many students choose not to live in campus housing for their own reasons. Sarah Gallop shared that their situation is similar, with 50% of graduate students living in campus housing. Tom Lucey provided additional information on the challenges that are faced when affordable housing plans are proposed. Joanne Kossuth echoed the comments that were made by Tom Lucey and Sarah Gallop, noting that many graduate students choose to live off campus. Councillor Toner asked if it would be beneficial for the Universities and Cambridge residents to have a shared transportation system and work together to provide services and available assets throughout the City. Tom Lucey pointed out that Harvard Shuttles are free of charge for anyone in the City to use and stressed the importance of how shuttles need to be efficient and on time to provide services to students to get where they need to go at the right time. Sarah Gallop shared that their approach to transportation is multi-faceted and promotes and encourages alternative ways of transit for their students. Sarah Gallop provided examples of some of the challenges that are faced with alternative transit, such as Red Line shutdowns, which makes the need for shuttle services to be efficient for the MIT community. Joanne Kossuth responded by sharing conversations within the Universities relative to transportation services and shared what some of the challenges could be. Joanne Kossuth also pointed out that with a hybrid working environment there has been a change in parking dynamics.

The Chair, Councillor Toner offered closing remarks and shared that there will be another public meeting with Harvard regarding the future Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement that will be scheduled for the summer.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 3, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:58p.m.

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/783?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the Agenda.

A communication was received from Tom Lucey, Director of Community Relations for Harvard University, transmitting a Town Gown presentation.

A communication was received from Sarah Gallop, Director of the Office of Government and Community Relations at MIT, transmitting the 2023 Town Gown presentation.

A communication was received from Joanne Kossuth, Chief Operations Officer for Lesley University, transmitting a Town Gown presentation.